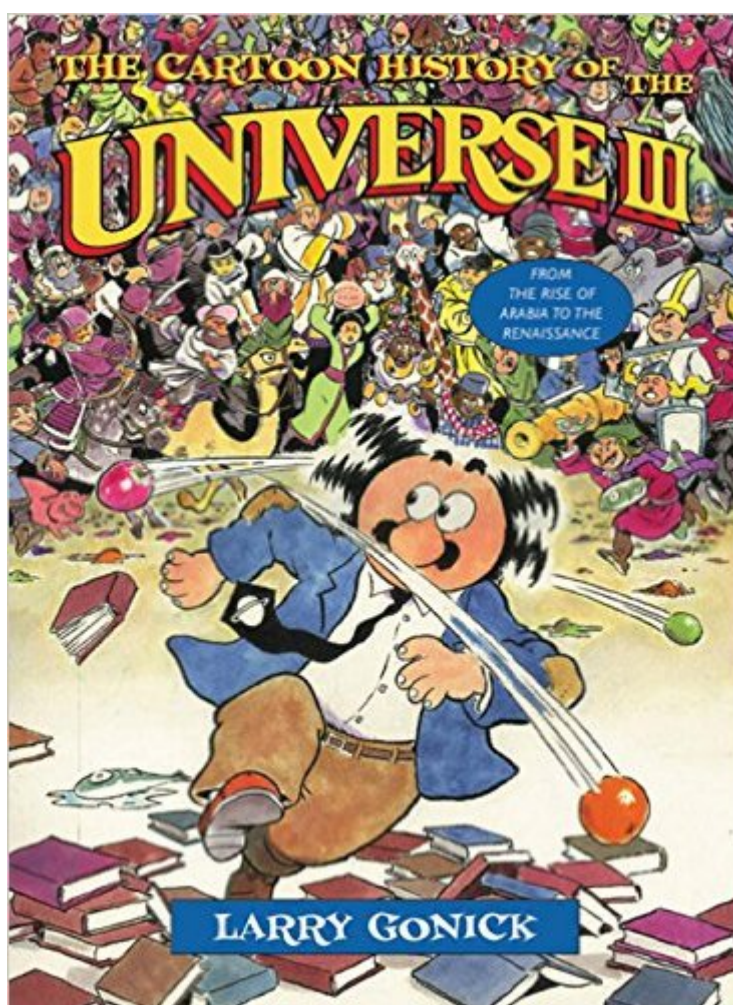


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The Cartoon History Of The Universe III: From The Rise Of Arabia To The Renaissance (Cartoon History Of The Modern World)



Synopsis

An irreverent survey in comics spanning world history from the birth of Islam to the Byzantine Empire to the Italian Renaissance. Larry Gonick's celebrated series *The Cartoon History of the Universe* is a unique fusion of world history and the comics medium, a work of serious scholarship and a masterpiece of popular literature. Praised by Jonathan Spence in the *New York Times Book Review* as "a curious hybrid, at once flippant and scholarly, witty and politically correct, zany and traditionalist," Gonick's clever illustrations deliver important information with a deceptively light tone, teaching us about the people and events that have shaped our world. This long-awaited new volume covers the Middle Ages around the globe, including the multicultural Middle East, West Africa and the cross-Saharan trade, Central Asia and the Byzantine Empire, the European Dark Ages and the Crusades, the Mongol conquests, the Black Death, the Ottoman Empire, the Italian Renaissance, and the rise of Spain, leading up to Columbus's departure for the new world. Gonick offers an historical survey that is at once multicultural, humanistic, skeptical, and laugh-out-loud funny.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Gonick is a highly trained mathematician who more or less left academe to become a cartoonist, and has won several awards in that endeavor. He's also a very fair general historian, especially in the way of multi-everything synthesis. This volume comprises volumes 14-19 in the series (as they were originally published), covering the back-story to and rise of Islam, the post-Roman history of

Africa, the further development of China and India, and all the complexity of events taking place in Central Asia. Oh, yeah -- Europe, too! Actually, most of us with professional historian's training are still apt to think in European and North American terms, for which Gonick's work is a great antidote. He also puts paid to any notion of Islam being a "peaceful" religion -- no more than Christianity, certainly -- and readers with a knowledge of Jewish history also will be nodding at his witty but pointed renderings. And how many comic books have you read that include an index and an annotated bibliography?

After having grown up with the "Amar Chitra Katha", a brilliant idea that put India's vast mythology, history, and even some classic stories and legends in comic book form, I can greatly appreciate Gonick's work here. I give it five stars even after reading some of the criticisms because of my own perspective on the presentation of historical "fact". There's never a case where the author's perspective or opinion isn't reflected in the work. We don't notice it when we agree with most of it. But again, all this is opinion. The Cartoon History of the Universe series lays out a frame or foundation for otherwise dreary historical matter. After reading this comic series, it's much easier to pick up a history book and build on that base or even make adjustments to suit what you find more accurate. People already in the field of history may see holes or flaws, but anyone who has already dodged that career path is now enlightened, and carries the seed of interest. Part III continues feeding me the reasonably heavy but still very entertaining content that makes me not want to put the book down. Gonick breaks the book into digestible parts, occasionally switching to a different part of the world or another culture and eventually bringing them all together. And this third book continues to make me laugh or smile. Look how gory history can be. The humor just reminds me of how we'd try to "look back and laugh" at the end of a difficult session of history class. I admit I may only pick up corrections and adjustments to my historical knowledge over time and as I encounter them. But at least I won't ignore them, thanks to this series.

I just finished reading this third volume of the greatest history books ever! It's simply a masterpiece. Larry Gonick has a superbly keen sense of understanding political, cultural, and even economical atmospheres in the context of the era he covers in this book (approx. 500-1500 CE). All the significant events and trends are tied together in an incredibly witty way, and always in a global context. He cleverly shows how interrelated and interdependent the world was back then. Jewish kingdom in Central Asia, Normans at the Balkans, and the Christian mother of Kublai Khan are all the surprising new gems of knowledge I gained from this delightful book. Drawing-wise, I am glad

Gonick took extra effort (better than Volume II) to create a feast of imagery and emotion. His medium of cartoon really gives much more than plain texts, especially historical texts. Just look into all those sad expressions of the ill-fated ones, and don't tell me you don't get sympathetic! Volume I was my favorite book when I was in middle school, Volume II during my senior year in high school, and now, with a degree in History, I still get inspired and taught by this new, and best yet, volume of the History of the Universe series.

It's been eight years since the last volume of Larry Gonick's fitfully-amusing, often-infuriating and always-interesting chronicle came out. Was Volume 3 worth the wait? Well, no, not really. I don't envy Gonick the task of squeezing three continents and 800 years into 300 pages, but he was able to do the second volume in four years, and many fans have been tapping our fingers with impatience waiting for this one to come out. That snit-fit out of the way, the book is all you'd expect from the previous volumes, with terrific chapters on the rise of Islam and the Mongols. The narrative gallops along at a brisk pace, with unexpected surprises and much needed chronicles of dark chapters in history, like Visigothic Spain. Gonick also cuts back on some of his politically-correct tendencies and amps up the humor in this work. You're not going to agree with all of Gonick's conclusions, he gets a few things wrong (the dates of Clovis' reign in France come 40 years after the man died) and is generally too hard on Europe and too easy on the Byzantine Empire and the caliphate. These are minor nits to pick, though. The book is as engaging as other entries in the series, and more informative than some straight histories. Here's hoping we don't have to wait another decade for Volume IV.

Larry Gonick's Cartoon History of the Universe (three volumes) is great stuff. He does an incredible job of distilling down history into easily readable chapters, not omitting Eastern history. Way more approachable and interesting for young (and not-so-young) adults, his books are prominent on my extensive history bookshelves. Worth reading! (Even the bibliographies at the end are worth looking through)

Read it, learn, and gain from its amusement at humankind's unevolved, persistent duplicity and foolishness. As a statement on human vanity, this is more illustrative than Ecclesiastes, and more informative and assimilable than the books that (for some) it circumvents.

I have built a large collection of Larry Gonick's books. I am a substitute teacher, and they are great

introductions to all of the subjects dealt with, and fun and funny to read, and really teach the subjects effectively, this one included. Every school library and public library should have a special Larry Gonick shelf.

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